

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8248

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 08775

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CB,

SUBJECT: FRENCH GOVERNMENT CHANGE IN POSITION CONCERNING
GKR

1. GKR CHARGE KENG VANNSAK TOLD EMBOFF THAT QUAI DIRECTOR FOR PROTOCOL, ANGLES, CALLED ON HIM APRIL 8 TO DIS-INVITE HIM FROM DINNER BEING GIVEN THAT EVENING BY PRESIDENT GISCARD FOR SOME OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS. ANGLES, WHO WAS VISIBLY VERY EMBARRASSED, SAID THAT GISCARD WISHED TO CONVEY TO VANNSAK THE ASSURANCES THAT THE CANCELLATION OF THE INVITATION WAS NOT BASED ON ANY PERSONAL ANTIPATHY, BUT ON "RAISON D'ETAT". GIVEN THE CURRENT POLITICAL AND MILITARY SITUATION WITHIN CAMBODIA, THE FRENCH PRESIDENT ASSUMED THAT VANNSAK WOULD UNDERSTAND THE REASONS FOR WHICH THE GOF WISHED HIM NOT TO ATTEND THE DIPLOMATIC DINNER. ANGLES SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN CHARGED ONLY WITH THIS MESSAGE FROM THE FRENCH PRESIDENT AND WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO DISCUSS THE NATURE OF THE "RAISON D'ETAT" WHICH HAD DICTATED THE GOF DECISION. ANGLES SUGGESTED THAT VANNSAK CONTACT THE POLITICAL AREA OF THE QUAI FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONCERNING THE BACKGROUND OF THE GOF DECISION.

2. VANNSAK THEN CALLED QUAI ACTING DIRECTOR FOR ASIAN AFFAIRS BOLLE TO REQUEST AN INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS, LABOULAYE, BASING HIS REQUEST ON ANGLES' SUGGESTION HE VISIT QUAI'S POLITICAL SECTION.

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QUAI RESPONDED THAT LABOULAYE IS OUT OF TOWN OR OTHER-

WISE ENGAGED IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE. BOLLE ARGUED THAT HIS TIME WAS TAKEN UP BY URGENT APPOINTMENTS AND SUGGESTED VANNSAK SEE ONE OF HIS SUBORDINATES, A LOW RANKING OFFICIAL WITHOUT ASIAN EXPERIENCE. VANNSAK REFUSED.

3. VANNSAK TOLD US HE WISHED TO REPORT ANGLES' CONVERSATION AND QUAI'S SUBSEQUENT REFUSAL TO PERMIT POLITICAL CONTACT. HE MAY WISH TO SEND A BRIEF REPORT VIA OUR CHANNEL.

4. COMMENT: WE ARE UNAWARE HERE OF ANY SPECIFIC ACTION VIS-A-VIS KHMER COMMUNISTS WHICH WOULD HAVE PROMPTED FRENCH PRESIDENT'S 11TH HOUR CANCELLATION OF INVITATION, CONTRARY TO ALL RULES OF DIPLOMATIC USAGE AND COURTESY. DESPITE EFFORT ANGLES MADE TO SOFTEN THE BLOW, THE ABSENCE OF CAMBODIAN CHARGE WILL NOT GO UNNOTICED. WE BELIEVE USG SHOULD NOT TAKE INITIATIVE IN CALLING ATTENTION TO OBVIOUS FRENCH SLIGHT TO GKR, BUT WE WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING HOW WE SHOULD RESPOND TO FRENCH ACTION AND HOW WE SHOULD ADVISE GKR CHARGE TO RESPOND SHOULD HE ASK FOR U.S. GUIDANCE.

RUSH

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